WILDSTORM UNIVERSE

#11
June

Suggested
For Mature
Readers

sleeper™

season two

ED BRUBAKER
SEAN PHILLIPS

WildStorm.com

HEY! HEY, YOU SON OF A BITCH!

AGENT ST. JAMES. WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, LYNCH?

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC.

I JUST GET OUT OF THE DAMN ***INFIRMARY***, AND WHAT DO I FIND WAITING ON MY DESK? A TRANSFER BACK TO ***DEPARTMENT P.S.I.!***

SO, WHAT-- YOU'RE ***TANKING*** ME?

NO, I'M PUTTING YOU BACK WHERE YOU ***BELONG***, VERONICA...

YOU WERE ALWAYS MORE SUITED TO THE ***SCIENTIFIC*** AND ANALYTICAL SIDE OF THINGS...

AND AS WE LEARNED LAST MONTH, YOU REALLY ***AREN'T*** CUT OUT FOR FIELD WORK.

THAT'S ***BULLSHIT***...MY FIELD WORK WAS ***FINE*** WHEN YOU NEEDED ME TO GET TO HOLDEN FOR YOU.

BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT WHAT YOU ***WANT***, YOU'RE TRYING TO SHUNT ME OFF TO THE SIDE.

YES, I AM. BUT MAYBE YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE IDEA THAT I'M DOING IT FOR YOUR ***OWN GOOD.***

MAYBE ***YOU*** SHOULD THINK ABOUT CONSULTING ME ABOUT WHAT'S ***GOOD*** FOR ME.

AND MAYBE YOU SHOULD REMEMBER WHICH ONE OF US IS IN CHARGE HERE.

DON'T FORGET THAT ***I'VE*** GOT SOURCES, TOO. YOU THINK I DIDN'T ***HEAR*** YOU LET HOLDEN GET ***TAKEN?***

YOU RUINED OUR LIVES, YOU BASTARD, AND NOW I'M SUPPOSED TO JUST STAND ON THE ***SIDE-LINES*** WHILE YOU THROW HIM UNDER THE BUS AGAIN?

YOU HAVE YOUR ***ORDERS***, AGENT. I EXPECT YOU TO FOLLOW THEM...

AND IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT, THEN I EXPECT YOU TO AT LEAST STAY OUT OF THE WAY OF THOSE OF US WHO ARE ***TRYING*** TO DO OUR JOBS.

AS FOR HOLDEN... THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY. I CAN ***ASSURE*** YOU...

"...HE'S IN GOOD HANDS."

AH, HOLDEN... I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D WAKE UP SOON...

WE NEED TO TALK, YOU AND I...TO *REASON* TOGETHER...

In the Crossfire

DON'T YOU THINK?

I LOVE HOW YOU ALWAYS SAY THAT...I DO... AS IF THERE WAS ***ANY*** REASON IN YOUR HEAD...

AS IF YOU'RE JUST THIS LOGICAL HIGHER POWER, SO CALM AND ABOVE US ALL...

INSTEAD OF JUST A SICK ***LITTLE KID*** WHO GREW TOO FAST.

BUT SURE, LET'S ***REASON*** THIS OUT...

...YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY FOUND ME OUT, SO I WOULDN'T WANNA DEPRIVE THE LITTLE ***BABY*** OF RUBBING MY FACE IN IT.

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST...JUST LET ME KILL HIM, ***PLEASE...***

LOOKS LIKE EVERYTHING'S GOOD TO GO, VERONICA, SORRY TO SEE YOU--

OOP. ***HEY***, YOU FORGET YOUR ***COMMUNICATOR?***

AH, SHIT, I THINK I LEFT IT WITH MY CLOTHES IN THE INFIRMARY, NATE...CAN YOU SEND SOMEONE TO PICK IT UP, OR...?

YEAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT... LIKE I SAY, SORRY TO SEE YOU GO OUT LIKE THIS. FRIGGIN' BRASS ALL THINK THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING...

YOU'LL BE MISSED.

THANKS... THAT MEANS SOMETHING.

...I KNOW YOU'RE UP TO ***SOMETHING***, LYNCH, YOU SMUG PRICK...

...SO LET'S SEE IF I CAN'T HACK YOUR FREQUENCY...

:SHKKKIKK:
--ANDER LYNCH TO RED AND BLACK SQUADS. I :SKKK: YOU BOTH READY TO BE IN THE AIR ON A MOMENT'S :SSHHKKKK: OUR WINDOW WILL BE SMALL--

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT...

...NOT CUT OUT FOR FIELD WORK... RIIIGGHT.

--DISAPPOINTED, HOLDEN, ***REALLY***... I THOUGHT YOU WERE SMARTER THAN THIS.

THAT YOU'D THINK YOU COULD PLAY ME. IT'S JUST...IT'S A BIT ***INSULTING***, ACTUALLY.

AND IT'S SO DISAPPOINTINGLY ***AVERAGE*** OF YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?

I MEAN, YOU'D HAVE TO HAVE A FAIRLY ***UNREALISTIC*** SENSE OF ***OPTIMISM*** TO THINK YOU'D GET AWAY WITH IT.

JUST LIKE THOSE ***SHEEP*** SCRABBLING AROUND DOWN THERE THINK THEIR LIVES MEAN ANYTHING TO THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE ***REAL*** DECISIONS IN THIS WORLD...

I THOUGHT I'D HELPED YOU GET BEYOND SUCH ***TYPICAL*** FALLACIES.

AND I'M SUPPOSED TO ***LISTEN*** TO THIS...? THIS ***INSIGHT?*** FROM SOME-ONE WHO CAN'T EVEN TELL OPTIMISM FROM ***DESPERATION?***

WHAT ARE YOU? ***BLIND?***

WHAT ELSE ***BESIDES*** UTTER DESPERATION WOULD MAKE ME TRY TO PLAY IN THE SAME GAME AS YOU AND LYNCH? MAKE ME PUT MY TRUST IN...

...IN ***HER***...

AND WHAT HAVE ***YOU*** GOT TO BE DESPERATE ABOUT?

I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE THAT I'VE GOT TWO ASSHOLES PLAYING TUG-OF-WAR WITH ***ME*** AS THE ROPE?

MAYBE BECAUSE I'VE SEEN YOU TOSS ENOUGH OF US ON THE FIRE THAT I KNEW, NO MATTER WHAT, I'D BE ***NEXT*** ON THAT LIST SOMEDAY...

OR MAYBE BECAUSE I ***BELIEVED*** YOU THAT DAY IN BERMUDA...

DID YOU?

MAYBE.

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, AND OUR ACTIONS DO MAKE US WHO WE ARE...***NOT*** OUR IDEALS. SO WHAT DOES ***THAT*** MAKE ME?

I ***WAS*** A MAN WHO KILLED FOR WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE THE RIGHT REASONS...

...AND YOU'VE MADE ME A MAN WHO KILLS FOR NO REASON AT ALL.

I DIDN'T MAKE YOU ANYTHING. I JUST SHOWED YOU THE TRUTH.

LYNCH MADE YOU...LIKE HE MADE ME.

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT THERE, TOO...BUT, WHAT IF THAT'S NOT WHO I ***WANT*** TO BE?

I'M *NOT* AN IDIOT. NOT ONE OF THE SHEEP WHO THINKS THE WORLD CARES ABOUT ME...I'M JUST SICK OF PLAYING A ROLE IN IT AT *ALL.*

YOU AND LYNCH CAN BREAK THE WORLD AND FIGHT OVER THE PIECES WHILE I'M LISTENING TO THE OCEAN SOMEWHERE FAR FAR AWAY.

YOU'D BE BORED IN A *WEEK.*

I'D *KILL* TO BE BORED... THE BORED DON'T KNOW HOW LUCKY THEY ARE.

CAN YOU *BELIEVE* THIS? DID YOU HAVE *ANY* CLUE HE WAS THIS PATHETIC?

AN INKLING OR TWO...I LIKED HIM BETTER WHEN HE WAS WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY.

I'M ALMOST TEMPTED TO LET YOU GO TO YOUR ISLAND, HOLDEN...JUST TO PROVE A POINT.

BUT I'M AFRAID THAT WOULD SET A *BAD EXAMPLE* FOR THE TROOPS...

I SUPPOSE IT'S TIME TO LET PETER SEE HOW LONG IT TAKES TO KILL YOU...HE'S BEEN *BEGGING* TO FOR SO LONG NOW...

ABOUT FUCKING TIME...

SIR? SORRY TO *INTERRUPT,* BUT WE'VE GOT A *PROBLEM.*

WHAT *IS* IT?

SOMETHING'S APPROACHING, SIR, SOMETHING SMALL AND *FAST.*

LET ME *SEE* THAT SENSOR..

WHAT IS IT?

FLYING CAR.

E.T.A.?

NOW.

BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM BLAM

GKKRKKSHH

FUCK!

TAKE HIM! TAKE HIM DOWN!

BLAMBLAM

BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM BLAM

COME ON, MOTHERFUCKER!

YEEAARRG!

YAAAHHH!

BIG MISTAKE... GETTING IN CLOSE.

OH, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...

WHAT...?

NO ONE'S GETTING IN MY HEAD EVER AGAIN, SON...NOT YOU *OR* YOUR BOSS.

UNLESS YOU KNOW HOW TO GET AROUND LYNCH'S ***MENTAL SHIELDS...***

HEH... NICE MOVE, LYNCH. WELL DONE.

ONLY THING IS...

...IT *WASN'T* LYNCH'S MOVE!

KRAK

...WHAT...?

KRAK

...BUT...

THAT'S RIGHT, TAO...

SMARTER THAN EVERY MAN ON EARTH, BUT *STILL* A SLAVE TO YOUR DICK... *PATHETIC.*

LET'S JUST MAKE SURE HE'S OUT...

AAAAIIEE!

BLAMBLAM

BLAM

YOU GOOD?

AS WELL AS CAN BE *EXPECTED*...DID YOU TELL LYNCH TO SEND GRIFTER IN A *FLYING CAR*, OR IS THAT JUST GOOD LUCK?

JUST LUCK.

GOOD...I'VE BEEN ABOUT DUE FOR SOME.

LET'S HOPE IT HOLDS.

BLAMBLAM

BLA BLAM BLAM

CAREFUL... DON'T WANT TO DROP HIM. NOT *YET*, AT LEAST.

OH, I'M SORRY...I THOUGHT WE WERE IN A *HURRY*?

YOU KNOW HOW TO DRIVE ONE OF THESE?

SADLY, YEAH, I DO. IT'S LIKE SAILING THROUGH RAPIDS...HOPE YOU DON'T GET *SEASICK*.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE DOWN BELOW?

CAN YOU GET KILLED BY FALLING VOMIT?

GOD DAMN YOU, NOW I'M TEMPTED TO FIND OUT.

HEY!

HEY! MOTHER-FUCKER!

BLAM BLAM BLAM

THAT'S MY RIDE!

BLAM BLAM

SHIT!

HOLDEN!

I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL! IT'S *OKAY!*

UGH...I THINK WE'RE GOING BE *ANSWERING* THAT QUESTION NOW...

GOD DAMN IT...STOLE MY FUCKIN' CAR...

YOU'VE GOT BIGGER PROBLEMS THAN THAT, DICKWAD...

...'CAUSE NOW I'M *REALLY* PISSED.

As with all things Lynch-related, Grifter hadn't been told the ENTIRE plan, just his part in it...

So, while he'd been just the cover we needed, he'd also thrown a monkey wrench into our escape.

IT'LL STILL *FLY?*

SURE, BUT FOR HOW LONG? I DON'T WANT TO FALL OUT OF THE SKY HALFWAY TO JERSEY.

SO, WHAT DO WE DO? I THOUGHT THE WHOLE POINT WAS SCREWING TAO AND LYNCH BOTH OVER...

WE *COULD* JUST DROP TAO OFF THIS ROOF, I SUPPOSE, BUT HOW DOES THAT FUCK WITH *LYNCH?*

LET ME CALL FOR A RIDE AND I'LL FILL YOU IN...

Which means, let me stall for another minute while I get up the nerve to explain what's really been going on all these months...

YEAH, THIS IS CARVER, RAN INTO A LITTLE TROUBLE...I'M GONNA NEED AN AIRLIFT FROM--

...while I figure out how to tell you I've been lying about almost everything.

--REPORTS OF SHOTS FIRED AT 655 7TH AVE. ALSO SEVERAL REPORTS OF EXPLOSIONS FROM THE SAME ADDRESS.

ROGER THAT, IT'S ONE OF OURS. CANCEL ALL POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO LOCATION. I.O. PRIORITY ADAM 42 OVERRIDE.

WHAT'RE YOU *DOING*, LYNCH? GETTING EVERYONE KILLED?

--IS CARVER, RAN INTO A LITTLE TROUBLE... I'M GONNA NEED AN AIRLIFT FROM THE TOP OF THE MASON BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF--

SCREEEEEECH

As expected, she doesn't take it well...

NO, WE'RE ***NOT.***

WE'RE ***NOT*** HANDING HIM OVER TO LYNCH, YOU SON OF A BITCH...

...THAT ***WASN'T*** THE DEAL.

I ***KNOW.*** I KNOW IT WASN'T, GRETCHEN. JUST, JUST--HEAR ME OUT...

THERE ARE BENEFITS HERE THAT YOU AREN'T THINKING OF...

AND COME ON, JUST THINK ABOUT IT FOR A SECOND...HE DESERVES WHATEVER THEY'LL DO TO HIM.

DESERVES...?

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST...YOU STILL THINK YOU'RE ONE OF THE ***GOOD GUYS,*** DON'T YOU?

NO, I JUST-- I JUST THINK THERE'S SOMETHING BETTER THAN THIS LIFE FOR US...

But maybe she's right, maybe some part of me deep inside DOES think that. Or maybe it just WANTS to think that...

Maybe that's what I need to get through what I've done. What I've become.

What I said to Tao, I WASN'T lying...I can't stand the person my actions have made me. When I thought I was on the side of the angels, I could get beyond it...

But now, I've just become a monster...a cold-blooded killer, untouchable, unfeeling...

And in my desperation, I made one incredibly foolish mistake...I thought she might feel the same way.

IT'S NOT JUST FOR ME...SURE, THEY CAN CURE ME, THEY THINK, BUT... LYNCH THINKS THEY CAN CURE ***YOU***, TOO...

THEY'VE RUN INTO YOUR CONDITION BEFORE, I GUESS AND--

CURE ME?

YOU THINK I ***WANT*** TO BE CURED?

YOU THINK I WANT TO LIVE SOME ***FANTASY LIFE*** AWAY FROM ALL THE ACTION WITH YOU?

I TOLD YOU ONCE, THIS ISN'T SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO ME, YOU ***IDIOT.***

THIS IS WHO I AM.

BUT...IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE.

GOD, I SHOULD'VE ***KNOWN*** YOU'D TRY SOME-THING LIKE THIS...

HOW COULD YOU ***EVER*** UNDERSTAND, WHEN YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE SLIGHTEST ***CLUE*** WHO YOU ARE?

WHAT'RE YOU--?

I'M WAKING UP THE DEVIL SO I CAN WATCH HIM DESTROY YOU, YOU STUPID BASTARD...

GET THE FUCK ***AWAY*** FROM THERE!

OH WHAT, NOW YOU'RE GOING TO SHOOT ME? I DON'T THINK SO.

YOU'VE SHOWN YOUR TRUE COLORS, HOLDEN, AND THEY'RE PALE.

GRETCHEN, DON'T... I ***WILL*** SHOOT YOU IF YOU TRY TO SET HIM FREE.

THEN DO IT!

...I WANTED TO SAVE YOU.

I DON'T WANT TO BE SAVED!

I DON'T--

--WANT TO BE--

--SAVED!

DO YOU HEAR ME?

BLAM

Instinct. That's all it is...

GRETCHEN!

A learned behavior that becomes more than second nature...

SHE WAS--

It's just instinct that makes it all fall to pieces in my hands.

BLAM

SHE-- SHE--

OH GOD...

VERONICA... WHAT'RE YOU...?

...SHHH... SHH...

WHY WERE YOU *HERE*...?

AH HA HA HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

Brubaker*Phillips*Strachan*Fletcher*Quinn*Dunbier